

**REMARKS**

This is in response to the first Office Action of June 1, 2006. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, and 8 have been amended. Each of these claims is in independent form. Claims 2-4 and 11-15 are cancelled. New claims 16-29 are added, with claims 16 and 19 being in independent form.

Thus, claims 1, 5-10, and 16-29 are in the application for examination. Of the pending claims, claims 1, 5, 8, 16, and 19 are in independent form.

Filed separately herewith is a Petition for a one-month extension of time along with credit card payment in the amount of \$570.00 to cover the extension of time fee (\$120), additional independent claims fee (\$400) and excess claims fee (\$50). If this fee is inaccurate, please debit or credit Deposit Account No. 06-1358.

Also filed separately herewith is a Second Information Disclosure Statement enclosing a copy of a European Search Report to a counterpart European patent application. Attached thereto are references cited with translations as appropriate, along with credit card payment in the amount of \$180.00 to cover the fee associated therewith.

In the first Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 5-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claims 5 and 8 are now placed in independent form. Thus, claims 5-10 are allowable in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 is a method claim and has been amended to recite that the object placed in the hermetically sealed treatment section has a length shorter than the length of the treatment section. The claim further recites that the treatment step includes first and second treatment steps with the second treatment step including the moving of the object to be treated so that it is at a specific position so as to

cause even treatment of the object. Newly added method claims 16-18 are also provided and are somewhat similar, but recite a guiding member within the treatment section. Independent claim 19 is an apparatus claim and recites that the object to be treated is a wiper blade and further recites that the object is shorter than the length of the treatment section. It is respectfully submitted that these limitations to the pending claims not otherwise indicated as allowable, sufficiently distinguish over the prior art as will be discussed.

In the first Office Action, the claims were rejected on anticipation grounds over the Muller et al. patent, U.S. Patent No. 4,539,185. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Preliminarily, it should be pointed out that the Muller patent corresponds to the Japanese patent application disclosed in the original English text of the present case. There, the Muller patent was distinguished because in Muller, treatment is to a continuous long object longer than the length of the treatment section, *i.e.*, the gas treatment chamber. This continuous object is continuously fed into the treatment and treated with a gas. The object is held in the treatment section for a desired time so as to be treated with a gas and is pulled down and only thereafter cut into individual product shapes.

It should be noted that in Muller, support for the object to be treated results from a roller 17, inlet member 2, roller 12, and roller 16. Each of the rollers are disposed outside the treatment section. This is adequate for the long continuous section as disclosed in Muller and there is no requirement that the treatment section include any support or guiding structures. Because there are no guiding structures within the treatment section, and the continuous object is held by rollers located outside the treatment section, uneven treatment of the object can be avoided. That is, in contrast to the present invention where there are rollers, for example, within the treatment chamber, which rollers could, but for the

advance of the present invention, cause uneven treatment. This problem does not exist in the Muller patent.

In the present invention, the object to be treated is a short object, such as a wiper blade, preformed and precut before treatment. The intent is to form the short object and then insert the short object in the treatment chamber. This is entirely different from the disclosure of the Muller patent.

Thus, there are three specific technical advances presented by the present invention. First, the object to be treated is an object shorter than the length of the treatment section. Second, the guide member for guiding the object to be treated is within the treatment section from an upper reach side to a lower reach side along the longitudinal direction of the treatment section. Third, the treatment is provided by two treatment steps. A first treatment step treats the object with gas at a desired position for a desired time. A second treatment step occurs after the object is moved in the treatment section to a second position for the desired time after completion of the first treatment step. A mechanism is provided for holding the object to be treated in each of these two positions.

It is quite clear that treatment of short objects cannot be undertaken in the structure of the Muller patent. There is nothing in the treatment section to hold a short object in a fixed place for a desired time. If a short object were placed in the Muller structure, it would simply fall to the bottom part by its own weight. Moreover, even if there were some wall surface placed in Muller, the short object would fall into contact with the surface and be treated, but the area of contact would not be completed treated with gas and thus the wiper blade would result in uneven treatment.

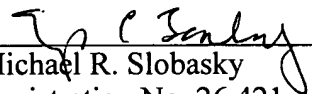
Attached hereto are explanatory drawings, Fig. A and Fig. B. Fig. A shows the object to be treated supported at a first treatment step and Fig. B shows the object to be treated at a second treatment step. When held in the first treatment step, the object is treated for a desired time. After the passage of

the time, the first operation piece is removed from the passage space and the object to be treated is moved a desired distance in a direction toward the outlet to be retained by the second operation piece 12. It is in this state that the object is treated again for a second time. The movement between the first and second treatment steps is such that the portion "a" that is not treated with gas in the first step because of the rollers, is able to be treated with gas in the second step. This assures even treatment of the wiper blade.

Accordingly, it is now believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so an early Notice of Allowance can be received.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Attachment:** Explanatory drawings, Fig. A and Fig. B